

CAUCASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Ashkhabad, and Merv in its western part, known as Transcaspia. The collapse of tsarist power in the spring of 1917 and the expulsion of the Russian Governor-General did not give rise to the creation of any unified administration for this large area, despite the appointment by the Provisional Government of N. N. Shchepkin, one of the leaders of the Cadet party, as Chairman of the Government Committee in Turkestan. Instead, various local committees, based either on ideology or on the revived spirit of nationalism, arose and exercised their authority in limited areas. The Kazaks of eastern Turkestan, stirred by their educated compatriots who had seen service in the Russian army during the war and who had come into contact with western ideas, called three Pan-Kirghiz congresses in April, June, and December of 1917 and organized the autonomous Kirghiz government of Alash Orda.

Aside from that movement, the Moslems of Kokand called a Congress in November, 1917, which resulted in the establishment in December of the Provisional Government of the Autonomous Peoples of Turkestan.

In Tashkent itself Russian socialist elements came to the fore, the two Social Democratic factions of Mensheviks and Bolsheviks competing with each other. Simultaneously with the November Revolution in the center of Russia, the Bolsheviks gained control in Tashkent also. As a result the Executive Committee there, which was composed of nine members, had seven Russian Communists and two Moslems.

Owing to these developments, Russian Turkestan found itself divided at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution into three political

centers: two of them nationalist, with democratic tendencies, and thus automatically anti-Russian and anti-Communist (Alash Orda and the autonomous Turkestan government in Kokand), and one Russian-Communist in Tashkent. The Tashkent Bolsheviks claimed authority over the whole area; and this claim necessarily demanded the clarification, on one hand, of their relationship with the two nationalist movements and, on the other, with the vast expanse of Transcaspia, including the strategically located railway and maritime center of Krasnovodsk.

Since Kokand is situated in geographical proximity to Tashkent, it